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HEADQUARTERS  
464TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)  
Office of the Intelligence Officer

BVB/FFE/hob

319.1

22 August 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO : Commanding Officer, 55th Bombardment Wing (H),  
APO 520, U S Army

1. On 22 August 1944, twenty-eight (28) scheduled B-24 a/c and three (3) spares took off at 0555B hours to bomb the Koreneuberg O/S in the Vienna area.

The thirty-one (31) a/c formed in two (2) attack units. The first attack unit was led by Lt. Colonel Charles F. McKenna III, Deputy Group Commander of the 464th Bombardment Group (H), and the second by 2nd Lt. John T. Welch, Flight Leader of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. The Group form-up, the line rendezvous and the Wing rendezvous were as prescribed.

3. Three of the scheduled a/c and one spare a/c returned early: B-24 a/c No. 42-50500 returned from 42°15'N-16°25'E, because the fuel transfer system was inoperative. This a/c landed at 0820B hours. A spare, B-24 a/c No. 41-29453 took the formation-position of this early return, and became an early return itself when low manifold pressure on No. 3 engine, surging manifold pressure at altitude on No. 2 engine and low fuel pressure on all four (4) engines forced this a/c to turn at 44°28'N-17°13'E landing at 1013B hours. B-24 a/c No. 42-51563 returned early from 45°47'N-17°20'E after losing No. 4 turbo, and losing No. 2 prop governor temporarily and because loose control of the ailerons made it difficult to keep this a/c in formation. B-24 a/c No. 42-78431 turned at 47°52'N-17°33'E because the loss of two (2) turbos made it impossible to maintain altitude. The electrical system also went out. This a/c landed at 1047B hours. Two (2) spares landed at 0845B hours and 0900 B hours after accompanying the formation to 42°54'N-16°50'E.

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4. Twenty-five (25) a/c were over the target at 1016B hours (briefed target time was 0950B hours). Twenty-three (23) a/c dropped fifty-seven and one half (57½) tons of 500 pound G.P. bombs (.1 nose and .025 tail fuse) from 23,200 feet. One (1) a/c jettisoned 2½ tons of bombs at 48°21'N-16°18'E just after target time when a rack malfunction prevented release of bombs on the target. One (1) a/c jettisoned 2½ tons of bombs at 48°12'N-16°04'E at 1025B hours. The select bar could not be put in select position and bombs could not be salvoed on the target so were jettisoned individually by hand. One of the early returns jettisoned 2½ tons of bombs at 44°20'N-17°00'E at 1047B hours in order to maintain altitude after the loss of two turbos. Three (3) other early returns and the two (2) spares brought back 12½ tons of bombs.

Recapitulation of bomb disposition information:

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Dropped on target | 57.50 tons        |
| Jettisoned        | 7.50 tons         |
| Returned to base  | <u>12.50 tons</u> |
| Total             | 77.50 tons        |

Bomb strike photos show numerous strikes concentrated on the central portion of the refinery. Two explosions resulted: One slightly northeast of the center of the plant and the other close to the north extremity of the target area. There were several direct hits on three large buildings at the north end of the refinery and probable hits on distillation units and the boiler house. Further west, there was a near miss on the storage tanks along the river bank.

5. The C-1 automatic pilot was used by the leader of each attack unit and the bombing was visual.

6. IAH flak was encountered at the target commencing at 1013B hours and lasting until 1020B hours. The formation was just on the fringe of the range from the guns to the east of Vienna. The flak here reported includes flak from Stockerau 48°24'N-16°12'E, Tulln 48°18'N-16°07'E, and from 48°14'N-16°10'E. The various areas of flak overlapped one another. No E/A were observed or encountered.

7. Fighter escort consisting of 16 P-51 a/c were first observed at 0930B hours at 46°50'N-17°25'E and provided escort to the target, cover over the target and withdrawal escort. Four (4) P-38 a/c were observed at 1113B hours at 45°38'N-17°01'E. The escort was last reported observed at

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1141B hours at 44°20'N-17°00'E.

8. The weather was generally clear for the entire route with visibility varying from fifteen (15) miles to "unlimited." There were a few scattered low clouds over the mountains. At the target, the weather was clear with visibility twenty (20) miles, and clear at the base on return.

9. B-24 a/c No. 42-50920 was lost to flak at the target. A/C was hit in No. 1 and No. 2 engines and salvoed its bombs immediately and went into a steep controlled glide. Five (5) chutes were seen to open before the a/c hit the ground. An incident worthy of note is reported by a co-pilot of one of the returning a/c. When one (1) hour from the target at about 1116B hours and while listening in on channel "A", this co-pilot believes he heard a garbled message from an aircraft in distress to the fighter escort stating that the a/c was YD (the color code to the lost a/c), that they had only two (2) engines, and were five (5) miles west of Lake Balaton at 14,000 feet. The reception was very poor and the informant is not too positive that he heard the a/c letters, "YD".

None of the returning a/c received flak damage.

10. The following observations were reported by returning crew members:

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Place</u>                | <u>Altitude</u> | <u>Observation</u>                        |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 0932        | Tapolza (46°54'N-17°27'E)   | 21,000          | 3 SEF and 2 TEF on A/D                    |
| 0942        | Papa (47°20'N-17°30'E)      | 21,000          | 3 SEF and 4 TEF on A/D                    |
| 1008        | Novy Dvur (48°26'N-17°01'E) | 23,000          | 6 SEF and 1 large a/c on A/D              |
| 1020        | Vienna                      | 23,000          | 10 to 15 barges in Danube north of Vienna |
| 1150        | 43°30'N-16°50'E             | 15,000          | Possible crashed plane and large fire     |

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- 11. Twenty-four (24) a/c landed at this base between 1245B hours and 1307B hours.
- 12. Route was flown as briefed. Track chart showing route as flown is attached.
- 13. Seven (7) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer

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